

Message Text

SECRET

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60

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 OMB-01 DRC-01 EB-11 AID-20

AGR-20 TRSE-00 /175 W

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R 222320Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1868

INFO AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

USLO PEKING

S E C R E T CANBERRA 5769

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CB

SUBJ: VISIT OF PRESIDENTIAL ENVOY SAK SUTSAKHAN TO
CANBERRA

REF: PHNOM PENH 10458

1. SPECIAL KHMER ENVOY, GENERAL SAK SUTSAKHAN, MET OCTOBER 19 WITH STATE MINISTER MORRISON AND LATER WITH DEPUTY SECRETARY SHANN AND OTHER DFA OFFICIALS, HE WAS UNABLE TO MAKE APPOINTMENT WITH PRIMIN WHITLAM WHO WAS INVOLVED IN QUEEN'S VISIT. FONMIN-DESIGNATE WILLISEE IS STILL OUT OF THE COUNTRY.

2. FOLLOWING SAK'S STANDARD PRESENTATION GIVING EVIDENCE OF NVN/VC AGGRESSION IN CAMBODIA, MORRISON ASKED WHETHER KHMER GOVERNMENT HAD APPROACHED HANOI WITH REGARD TO NEGOTIATIONS. SAK SUTSAKHAN REPLIED THAT IT HAD NOT DONE SO BECAUSE ARTICLE 20 OF THE VIETNAM AGREEMENT ALREADY SET FORTH CLEARLY THE REQUIREMENT FOR NORTH VIETNAM WITHDRAWAL FROM CAMBODIA. IT WAS NOW AN ISSUE TO BE WORKED OUT AMONGST THE KHMER ELEMENTS INVOLVED.

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MORRISON TOLD SAK THAT AUSTRALIA WAS WILLING TO PLAY

A MEDIATORY ROLE IN CAMBODIA BUT HAD NOT BEEN APPROACHED IN THAT REGARD BY EITHER SIDE NOR BY OTHERS INVOLVED SUCH AS CHINA.

3. IN TELLING ME THIS, KHMER AMBASSADOR CHHUT CHHOEUR COMMENTED THAT THIS IS NOT THE FIRST TIME THE AUSTRALIANS HAD INDICATED THEIR DESIRE TO BECOME INVOLVED IN A MEDIATORY CAPACITY; CHHUT HAS ALREADY SENT A NUMBER OF MESSAGES TO PHNOM PENH OVER THE LAST SEVERAL WEEKS REPORTING SIMILAR APPROACHES FROM SHANN AND OTHERS ON THAT SUBJECT. HOWEVER, CHHUT CHHOEUR HAD COME TO HAVE RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE DESIRABILITY OF AUSTRALIA BECOMING INVOLVED, FOLLOWING A CONVERSATION HE HAD HAD LATE EVENING OF OCTOBER 19 WITH FORMER AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR TO CAMBODIA FEAKES WHO IS NOW DIRECTOR OF POLICY PLANNING IN DFA. FEAKES HAD TOLD HIM THAT HE WAS GOING TO SAY SOMETHING THAT MIGHT BE REGARDED AS DISLOYAL TO HIS GOVERNMENT, BUT THAT HE HAD TO GET IT OFF HIS CHEST: IF AUSTRALIA WERE TO BECOME INVOLVED IN THE NEGOTIATIONS, THE CHANCES WOULD BE STRONG THAT WHITLAM WOULD SEEK TO TAKE THIS MATTER UP WITH SIHANOUK IN PEKING DURING HIS VISIT THERE NEXT MONTH; AND IN PREPARATION FOR THAT ENCOUNTER, AUSTRALIA MIGHT WELL SEEK TO ESTABLISH ITS CREDENTIALS AS AN IMPARTIAL MEDIATOR BY TAKING A MORE NEUTRAL STAND.

4. WHEN I SAW MINISTER MORRISON BRIEFLY AT A SOCIAL FUNCTION OCTOBER 19, HE VOLUNTEERED THAT HE HAD BEEN GIVEN A PRESENTATION BY SAK SUTSAKHAN WHICH HE DID NOT FIND IMPRESSIVE. HOWEVER, IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION, MORRISON SAID THAT AUSTRALIA WOULD SUPPORT THE LON NOL GOVERNMENT AGAINST SIHANOUK IN UN VOTING IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT AUSTRALIA NOW RECOGNIZED THAT GOVERNMENT.

5. SAK SUTSAKHAN TOLD ME HE FELT THAT HIS TRIP HAD GONE WELL IN THE SENSE THAT REACTIONS OF GOVERNMENTS VISITED HAD BEEN GENERALLY POSITIVE. HE DID EXPRESS CONCERN, HOWEVER, THAT THE NEW GOVERNMENT IN THAILAND MIGHT NOT CARRY THROUGH ON PLEDGES MADE BY THE THANOM GOVERNMENT FOR CERTAIN RICE DELIVERIES TO CAMBODIA. I WAS SOME-
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WHAT SURPRISED TO LEARN FROM SAK SUTSAKHAN THAT HE HAD NOT RAISED ESF WITH THE AUSTRALIANS, NOR HAS CHHUT CHHOEUR. I URGED HIM TO DO SO.
GREEN

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NNN

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